

Message Text

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ORIGIN PM-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 EB-11 L-03 DODE-00 SS-20 SP-03

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 NSC-07 EUR-25 /102 R

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DOD/ISA/NESA - CDR SICK

EB/AV - MRS. GRAVATT (SUBSTANCE)

US NAVY :CAPT. GEOVANETTI

EUR/NE - MR. FLOYD

L/EB - MR.GAOTJER

----- 125742

R 221504Z MAY 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

CINCPACFLT

COMIDEASTFOR

USDAO PARIS

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E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS:PFOR,MV

SUBJECT: ALLEGED US VIOLATION OF MALDIVIAN AIRSPACE

REFERENCES: COLOMBO 1177

STATE 89699

1. WE HAVE CONDUCTED A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF THE APPARENT INTRUSION BY A US NAVY AIRCRAFT INTO MALDIVIAN AIRSPACE ON APRIL 20.

2. ON APRIL 19TH, OUR DAO IN PARIS ADVISED COMIDEASTFOR THAT THE OCEANOGRAPHIC SHIP "LADY CHRISTINE", OF PANAMANIAN REGISTRY AND UNDER CHARTER TO TRANSPORTATION GENERAL GEOPHYSICS OF PARIS, WAS GROUNDED AT 04.45N, 73.24E WITH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AN ESTIMATED THIRTY FRENCH RESEARCH PERSONNEL ON BOARD.

COMIDEASTFOR READDRESSED THAT ADVISORY MESSAGE TO COMSEVENTHFLT AND CARRIER TASK FORCE 72 FOR ACTION. ON APRIL 20TH, THE COMMANDER OF TASK GROUP 72.3, IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, DIRECTED A US NAVY P-3 TO CONDUCT A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION TO CONDUCT A VISUAL AND RADAR SEARCH FOR THE "LADY - CHRISTINE," ESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE SHIP, AND DETERMINE IF AND WHATEVER ASSISTANCE MIGHT BE REQUIRED. USDAO COLOMBO WAS AN INFORMATION ADDRESSEE ON THIS MESSAGE (CTG 72.3 200915Z APR 74 - NOTAL).

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3. IN RESPONSE TO THIS MESSAGE, A P-3 ATTACHED TO THE

TASK GROUP FOUND THE LADY CHRISTINE AGROUND ON A REEF AT THE LOCATION REPORTED. THE SHIP WAS LISTING FIFTEEN DEGREES TO PORT, AND THERE WERE FOUR SMALLER CRAFT IN THE VICINITY. THE AIRCRAFT MADE A NUMBER OF PASSES WHILE ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH RADIO CONTACT, AND THE SHIP FIRED ONE GREEN FLARE; NO ASSISTANCE APPEARED TO BE REQUIRED.

4. FYI ONLY: THE FLIGHT WAS COORDINATED WITH RAF/GAN, GIVING THE AIRCRAFT CALL SIGN, MISSION, AND COMMUNICATIONS FREQUENCIES. ALTHOUGH THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION, COUPLED WITH THE FACT THAT IT TOOK PLACE OVER A WEEKEND, MADE PRIOR CLEARANCE WITH THE GOM PROBLEMATIC, DAO COLOMBO WAS AN INFO ADDRESSEE ON THE TASK GROUP INSTRUCTION TO GET AN AIRCRAFT ON THE SCENE. THE AIRCRAFT REMAINED IN CONTACT WITH GAN THROUGHOUT THE FLIGHT. WE RECOGNIZE THAT KEEPING RAF/GAN INFORMED DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A CLEARANCE FROM THE GOM; ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WERE CLEARLY MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH COMPELLED AN URGENCY WE ARE SURE THE GOM WOULD NOT HAVE WISHED TO INTERFERE WITH. END FYI

5. PLEASE PROVIDE THE SUBSTANCE OF PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3 TO THE GOM. WE REALIZE THAT PRIOR CLEARANCE SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM THE GOM BEFORE OUR PLANES ENTER THEIR AIRSPACE, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES (THE WEEKEND PLUS THE URGENCY OF THE HUMANITARIAN NATURE OF THE MISSION), WE FELT IT BETTER TO GET AN AIRCRAFT ON THE SCENE QUICKLY RATHER THAN AWAIT COMPLETION OF BUREAUCRATIC PROCEDURES (OURS AS WELL AS THEIRS). IF YOU BELIEVE IT WOULD BE USEFUL, YOU MAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUCH THIS AS A MILD FORM OF REGRET; PLEASE TELL THEM THAT WE APPRECIATE THE FACT THAT THEY DID NOT FORMALLY PROTEST THE INTRUSION, AND WE IN TURN ACKNOWLEDGE THAT NORMAL PROCEDURES CALL FOR US TO OBTAIN PRIOR PERMISSION. YOU MIGHT INQUIRE FOR POSSIBLE FUTURE USE ADVICE FROM THE GOM ABOUT HOW WE COULD OBTAIN RAPID CLEARANCE (INCLUDING OVER WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS) TO LAUNCH A SEARCH AND RESCUE MISSION IN SIMILAR CRITICAL SITUATIONS. RUSH

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